

asked the questions of what happened to the troops, the amount of troops, what happened to the KEVLAR vests, the Humvees; how come there are not enough men and women that the ambassador and the general had asked for.

Not a question. Nobody is responsible. Nobody ever got fired, let alone the questions about the intelligence going into it.

Take Medicare. We debated here on this floor, and I voted against that bill and said it was going to lead to great confusion to seniors. Rather than a simple plan, letting negotiations happen, letting reimportation happen, and letting generics hit the market, which all would drive the price down of prescription drugs and save money, Members here said and the administration said it will only cost \$390 billion over 10 years. Before the ink was dry, it rose to \$790 billion. So all the taxpayers are going to have to pay double what they were told and everybody in the administration knew.

One person who said, here is what the report said, was under threat of being fired if they let that information out. Yet now, with 2 years to prepare, 2 years to get ready, the Web site, run by HHS, had the information wrong. The catalogue they sent out to every senior had it wrong. It has led to massive confusion where seniors now are sometimes double enrolled, cannot get enrolled, and where States are having to step in for the poorest of the poor because they cannot get their plan. It is run like, as some people say, they couldn't run a one-car parade if they tried.

Again, that massive incompetency and the inability of this Congress to have oversight and keep people's feet to the fire and hold them accountable, to ask the questions and get the answers the American people want are not being done today.

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And the incompetency is not isolated to Medicare or Iraq. Take the response to Hurricane Katrina: when we saw that tape, we now learn that, in fact, Mr. Brown, or known to the rest of us as Brownie, was doing a heck of a job, and he gets fired, and yet it is Chertoff who is still head of the Homeland Security Department, had no idea what was going on, no line authority, never involved himself, and we had a massive disaster.

When you run through the economy, Iraq and the deficit, what this President has done, I would settle, and I think the rest of the country would be quite happy if we had a competent conservative rather than the compassionate conservative that we were promised. The American people are not looking for a compassionate conservative, a fiscal conservative, or a social conservative. A competent conservative would do America well.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Under a previous order of the

House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### HONORING FIRST SERGEANT BRAD KASAL

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to deliver the story of an American hero, Marine First Sergeant Brad Kasal, to this Chamber and to the American people.

Sergeant Kasal was born in the small town of Afton, Iowa, where he was raised on a small family farm and where he learned Midwestern values which would later serve him very well in his service in the United States Marine Corps. Sergeant Kasal is 39 years old and has served three tours of duty in Iraq and Kuwait. He is a member of Weapons Company, Third Battalion, First Marine Regiment, also known as "Thundering Third."

When you hear Sergeant Kasal's story of courage and sacrifice, it is not surprising that he comes from a solid family of patriots who have also served our country.

Brad Kasal's brother Jeff is a retired Army paratrooper who served our country in Operation Desert Storm with the 82nd Airborne and now works in Iraq. Brad's brother Kelly served in the United States Army, and his brother Kevin also served in the United States Marine Corps. And 50 years ago, their father, Gerald, served in the Iowa National Guard.

But even among the patriotic Kasal family, Sergeant Brad Kasal's experiences set him apart. During his three tours of duty in Iraq and Kuwait, Sergeant Kasal has received two Purple Hearts. His first was awarded for an incident in August 2004 for shrapnel wounds to the face, neck and shoulder from a rocket-propelled grenade.

His second Purple Heart came from events which took place on November 13, 2004, when Marines were in their fifth day of Operation Phantom Fury, which was a battle to free Fallujah from the grip of the terrorists.

Sergeant Kasal was patrolling the streets and had the duty of clearing terrorists from buildings when he saw a fellow marine wounded and leaving a building. He told him that three more of their men were still inside and under attack.

Without regard for his own life and safety, Sergeant Kasal charged into the

building to defend and rescue his men. It was then that he saw several dead Iraqis, the wounded Marines, and a terrorist confronting him with an AK-47 rifle less than 2 feet away. While he managed to dodge the bullets and kill that terrorist, another terrorist was able to sneak up behind him and open fire. Sergeant Kasal was hit by those bullets and fell to the ground. He was dizzy and disoriented from his wounds, but he immediately began caring for another wounded marine. Sergeant Kasal knew he had to stay alive to save himself and the others. As he struggled to remain conscious, a grenade dropped onto the ground next to a wounded marine.

Responding to his instinct to protect his comrade, Sergeant Kasal threw his own body over Private First Class Alexander Nicoll. Thankfully, Sergeant Kasal's helmet and body armor protected his vital organs, but he took the full brunt of shrapnel to his back, shoulders and legs. For the next 45 minutes as he lay grievously wounded, Sergeant Kasal used his 9 millimeter handgun to defend himself in a prolonged shootout where he suffered another bullet wound.

This picture shows Sergeant Kasal being helped from the building still clutching his trusty 9 millimeter handgun. He explained that he kept the gun because he was being evacuated through a kill zone where he knew a number of terrorists remained, and he feared his weapon might be needed to fend off more potential attackers.

Long after he was rescued, Sergeant Kasal learned the full extent of his injuries. Ultimately, he lost 60 percent of his blood. He took 40 pieces of shrapnel wounds, and suffered seven bullet wounds.

Despite his wounds, Sergeant Kasal said his efforts and wounds were worthwhile. The marine whom he shielded, Private Nicoll, had survived the battle.

Sergeant Kasal must undergo constant medical procedures and therapy, but his ultimate goal is to recover so he can resume his service in the Marine Corps to defend you and me and the people of our country.

Marine First Sergeant Brad Kasal does not think of himself as a hero. He is a model Marine and hero for Americans.

In all wars, there are stories of bravery and heroism. The story of Marine First Sergeant Brad Kasal stands out among them. There is no doubt that Sergeant Kasal's actions on November 13, 2004, prove he is an honorable marine with a bigger passion for his fellow marines and our country than his own life and safety.

Sergeant Kasal believes the values he learned in his Iowa upbringing, as well as the strong spirit of the Marine Corps, gave him the strength and will to persevere in an otherwise unsurvivable situation.

Sergeant Kasal makes me proud to be an Iowan and an American; and I thank him for his bravery, honor, and patriotism.